



## PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

for greater philadelphia

1616 Walnut Street, Suite 2110  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215.546.1146

## PRESERVATION

# MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE FOR GREATER PHILADELPHIA

## PHILADELPHIA REGION'S MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Every year, preservation organizations around the country identify the most endangered properties in their region. This practice was begun by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1988 with the goal of bringing to public attention historic sites that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy. In Philadelphia, the annual list was initiated by the Preservation Coalition, and is being revived by the Preservation Alliance to focus advocacy and education efforts on vulnerable historic sites that are important to the city and region.

To arrive at the final list, the Alliance solicited nominations from historic preservation and community organizations throughout the city. Nominations ranged from residential buildings, to churches and public buildings, as well as bridges and objects related to the history of a particular neighborhood. With the help of a

group of preservation professionals, we selected nine sites to designate for 2003.

Previous endangered buildings lists for Philadelphia included many large landmark buildings like the US Naval Home, the Victory Building and the Boyd Theater. It is interesting to note that this year's list of nominations includes fewer properties of such stature, many of which are located in adjacent counties rather than within the city of Philadelphia. This is a reflection of the recent progress that has been made on preserving many of Philadelphia's formerly endangered landmark properties (see our Fall 2003 newsletter). It also reflects a shift of preservation concerns from individual landmark buildings, often in Center City, to a greater awareness of the preservation issues that threaten the types of buildings that make up the fabric of the city and its neighborhoods, especially residential and religious.

Since many of the buildings and sites that did not make our final list are also noteworthy and deserving of preservation, we include a brief listing of other nominations in the hope that this will help groups concerned with these sites gain support for their preservation.

As well as identifying endangered properties, we are also suggesting active steps that could save them. The Alliance intends to follow-up on these suggestions and to include these sites in our advocacy efforts for the coming year.

We are grateful to the Samuel S. Fels Fund for a grant that supported this effort, and to all the organizations and individuals who responded to our request for nominations.

John Andrew Gallery  
Executive Director

### 2003 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PROPERTIES

1. The Lazaretto Quarantine Station, Tinticum, Delaware Co.
2. North Philadelphia Historic Neighborhood Blocks
3. Germantown Town Hall
4. Historic Farmhouse, Kingsessing
5. Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park
6. Christ Temple Church, North Philadelphia
7. Uptown Theater, North Philadelphia
8. Church of Christ, West Philadelphia
9. Sleighton School Campus, Glen Mills, Delaware Co.

### The Lazaretto Wanamaker Avenue at 2nd Street, Tinticum, Delaware County



Photo by Will Stacey

**Significance:** Situated on 10 acres on the Delaware River in Tinticum Township just south of Philadelphia International Airport, the Lazaretto was the first quarantine station for the port of Philadelphia, and believed to be the last surviving example of its type in the country. For nearly 100 years, the crews and passengers on ships coming

up the Delaware to Philadelphia were inspected at the Lazaretto for communicable diseases such as smallpox.

If infections were found, both cargo and passengers would be quarantined at the Lazaretto's then-isolated location. (The name "Lazaretto" derives

from Saint Lazarus, an early Christian who gave aid to lepers.) Thousands of quarantined passengers were detained at the Lazaretto's hospital, and many diseased immigrants were returned to their native lands having set foot in the new world only at the Lazaretto.

Five structures survive from the early days of the Lazaretto: a brick stable and shed, a waterfront watch house, the chief physician's house, and the main hospital and administrative building. This Georgian-style structure, built in 1799, features a central block and symmetrical flanking wings—topped by a hip roof and cupola—similar in style to Pennsylvania Hospital and Independence Hall. "It retains a remarkable amount of integrity and original material," says Preservation Alliance associate director Randy Cotton, including double-hung 12-over-12 window sashes, wide-board pine floors, marble mantelpieces, paneled doors, and handsome moldings.

**Threat:** Since being bought by private developers, Island Marine Partners, in 2000, the Lazaretto has been threatened with demolition for redevelopment as either remote parking for Philadelphia International Airport or a new hotel and restaurant. Tinticum Township has denied several applications for use variances, though it has no protective preservation ordinance in place. The owners have appealed the denials. There is speculation, says Cotton, that the owners' principal interest may be in developing a riverfront casino should gambling be legalized in Pennsylvania. All the historic structures are vacant and although

there is an active marina on the property, the Lazaretto, like any unoccupied building, is susceptible to vandalism, fire, and deterioration.

**Solution:** Tinticum Township has received \$200,000 in state funds for the preservation of the Lazaretto and has garnered the support of a wide array of local citizens and preservationists including the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Delaware County, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). A committee formed to explore strategies to save and restore the landmark concluded that major fundraising efforts to acquire and restore the property would be limited until a re-use feasibility study could determine the courses of action most likely to succeed. Initially supportive of the feasibility study, the current owners now will not allow access to the property and state that they are only interested in an outright, unconditional sale of the Lazaretto for \$3,500,000. There are two reasonable preservation strategies at this point. First, the property owners should consent to the feasibility study by granting access to the property in the expectation that the study will result in a viable acquisition and re-use plan that satisfies all parties. Lacking that cooperation, a governmental entity, such as the Redevelopment Authority of Delaware County or PHMC, should acquire the property. The Lazaretto's uniqueness, compelling history, and national significance deserve proactive, aggressive governmental action in the public's interest.

*continued on page 3*

winter 2003

www.preservationalliance.com

# REGIONAL INITIATIVES

## PRESERVATION ALLIANCE WEB SITE IMPROVED AND EXPANDED NEW SEARCH TOOLS FOR REGIONAL PRESERVATION NETWORK AND RESTORATION DIRECTORY



Need a restoration mason to do work in Coatesville? Need information on a local historic district in Doylestown? Trying to find a historic society in Darby?

Then go to [www.preservationalliance.com](http://www.preservationalliance.com)!

The Alliance web site [www.preservationalliance.com](http://www.preservationalliance.com) continues to grow, adding new features to aid preservationists in the southeast Pennsylvania region. Funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, web users can now find preservation-affiliated organizations and restoration services throughout Chester, Bucks, Delaware, and Montgomery counties, as well as Philadelphia.

Along with the popular "What's New?" (current preservation stories) and the Events Calendar sections of the web site, the two new searchable databases will strengthen the Alliance's ability to serve as a "central clearinghouse" of information on a wide range of regional historic preservation and community revitalization activities and issues.

The web-based "Regional Preservation Network" (RPN) is a database of more than 250 preservation-affiliated organizations such as historical societies, historical architectural review boards, open-space and smart-growth programs, preservation-planning agencies, and Main Street projects. Search and sort tools on the RPN allows users to find regional resources by organizational type,

geographic area, and/or organizational or contact name. Search results will provide a specific organization's mission, activities and programs, contact information, and a link to its web site. Thus a RPN user can find, for example, all the historical societies in Delaware County, or the municipal contact information for historic districts in Lower Merion.

Similarly, the "Regional Restoration Directory" (RRD) is a searchable database of more than 200 contractors, professionals, and retailers who provide restoration services and products in the five-county region. The RRD allows web searches by trade, location, and /or firm or contact name.

For more than fifteen years, the Preservation Alliance has maintained an unofficial and unpublished list of restoration service-providers, and now much of that information is on-line! (It should be noted that the Alliance does not endorse or warrant the services of those listed on the RRD.)

The new web features is one initiative by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia to serve constituents beyond the city of Philadelphia. Although the Alliance has always made an effort to be involved in regional preservation issues, these efforts have more often been sporadic.

Now, thanks to grants from the Claneil Foundation and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Alliance is able to initiate several

region-wide activities to help the many suburban-based preservation groups better communicate, coordinate efforts, and collectively advocate for historic preservation.

For example the Preservation Alliance, with numerous regional co-sponsors, is convening a November 21 workshop "How to Sell Historic Preservation to a Skeptical Public". The workshop is specifically designed for suburban preservationists who continue to encounter indifference, even hostility to, and misperceptions about historic preservation by local township officials and taxpayers. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tom Hylton – author of *Save Our Land, Save Our Towns* – will be the featured workshop speaker.

This workshop topic – i.e., effectively promoting historic preservation as a civic value – was suggested by an ad-hoc committee of practicing preservationists based on their real-world encounters in the four suburban counties. This committee will continue to advise the Alliance on future workshop topics – two per year are planned.

Another regional Alliance initiative for 2004 will be to work closely with a county planning office to proactively reach out to township and borough elected officials to better inform them of the benefits of historic preservation and about preservation planning tools that effectively combat unplanned suburban sprawl and the deterioration inner-ring-suburb communities.

## VICTOR BUILDING IN CAMDEN OPENS



The Victor luxury loft apartments opened in October in the former "Nipper" building, an icon of the Camden waterfront since 1916-18 when it was the manufacturing headquarters of the RCA Victor Company and the birthplace of recorded sound. Carl Dranoff, president of Dranoff properties, developer of the project and a member of the Preservation Alliance board of directors, has converted the historic property to 341 luxury apartments, with a landscaped atrium courtyard, roof-top observation deck and supportive retail and office space. The Victor is the first luxury residential housing to be built in the city of Camden and marks a significant contribution to the revitalization of the Camden waterfront and the city. "The Victor offers individuals the opportunity to, literally, move in to one of the most exciting new communities and destinations in this region," said Dranoff. "The Camden waterfront with its spectacular views is an exciting amalgam of development and a hub for tourists and local entertainment."

The Victor Building, originally built for the Victor Talking Machine Company, was begun in 1909 and finished in 1918. It was regarded as the crowning achievement of RCA Victor's manufacturing complex in Camden, which one encompassed 31 buildings on 58 acres. Designed by Ballinger and Perot, the six story Victor's most visible component is the 75 foot high Nipper Tower, originally built as a water tower. The tower features stained glass windows with the famous Victor trademark entitled "His Masters Voice" picturing a dog listening with puzzled expression to one of the new "talking machines." Many of the original architectural details of the building remain, retaining the form and characteristics representative of early 20th century industrial architecture. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

The Victor is a continuation of Dranoff's highly successful conversions of historic properties for residential use in Philadelphia, most recently represented by the Left Bank in West Philadelphia.

## REGIONAL PRESERVATIONISTS GET TOGETHER



On September 26th thirty preservationists from Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Bucks counties enjoyed a get-together at the historic property of John and Wynne Milner. John is Vice Chair of the Preservation Alliance and a respected, long-time preservationist and restoration architect active in both Philadelphia and its suburban regions.

The event was sponsored by the Alliance to bring together representatives from regional preservation organizations to increase awareness of their individual preservation activities and to provide opportunities for more collaborative efforts.

The Milners' property was originally the 1724 brick house and stone barn of Abiah Taylor, a prominent English Quaker farmer and miller. John and Wynne have restored the house as their residence and the barn as home for a family of Sicilian donkeys. The property is surrounded by a magnificent Chester County landscape that is protected, through ownership and conservation easements, by the Natural Lands Trust and the Brandywine Conservancy.

# 2003 ENDANGERED PROPERTIES

continued from page 1

## North Philadelphia Historic Neighborhood Blocks



Photo courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey

**Significance:** “North Philadelphia has the largest and richest collection of Victorian buildings in the city,” argues Joanne Jackson, executive director of the Advocate Community Development Corporation. Developed in the late 19th century, these neighborhoods reflected Philadelphia’s then burgeoning middle class—supported by an expanded electric street railway system—and boasted homes designed by some of the most prominent architects of the day. Many of these blocks are protected by National Register Districts,



Photo Courtesy Historic American Buildings Survey

including sections of Strawberry Mansion, the Diamond Street area, and the Street Car Subway historic district around 17th and Master Streets. Some of the most notable historic structures in the area—many of which are National Historic Landmarks—were surveyed by the Historic American Building Survey. Preservation Pennsylvania ([www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org)) recognized the significance and vulnerability of these blocks by naming the historic districts in which they are located to its 2003 endangered

property list. Three blocks were also selected for the 2003 AIA Landmark Building Award ([www.aiphila.org](http://www.aiphila.org)).

**Threat:** As population has declined, North Philadelphia has experienced significant abandonment, with some buildings demolished and others left vacant. The problem, says Jackson is compounded because the area has dropped from public consciousness. “If you look at guidebooks on Philadelphia architecture, very few even mention these neighborhoods.” The Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI), through which the City intends to demolish 12,000 buildings over the next five years, threatens many of these blocks, and several sections with important historic resources are among the earliest areas targeted. While there is no doubt that many vacant buildings need to be demolished, and that some historic structures are probably too far gone to save, the danger is that many more properties will be lost than is necessary.

**Solution:** Recently, the City has begun to give more consideration to historic preservation as a factor in making decisions about properties to be demolished by the NTI program, promising to preserve the block of Willis Hale houses in the 1900 block of N. 17th Street and putting on hold demolition of certain other historic properties. It has also secured a Preservation Development Initiative grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to develop a clearer strategy for historic preservation and the NTI program.

### These are positive first steps.

Now the City needs to take advantage of the National Trust’s assistance to formalize a review process and criteria for historic preservation. This should include an opportunity for historic preservation and community organizations to comment on properties proposed for demolition well before final decisions are made. Properties designated for preservation should be secured, turned over to non-profit or private developers for restoration, or held until market conditions in the neighborhoods improve.

The City should set aside some NTI funds exclusively for historic preservation to support this approach. Matching grants from foundations would ensure that historic properties protected from demolition are encapsulated and secured for long-term preservation. This might be accomplished through an expansion of the very successful Pew-funded Philadelphia Intervention Fund managed by Preservation Pennsylvania. In addition, the National Trust proposes, as part of the PDI grant, to create a \$1.5 million revolving loan fund for historic preservation in Philadelphia using some of its funds from a Knight Foundation grant to seed such a fund. This will be a helpful resource to assist in the restoration of properties preserved by NTI. The City and Philadelphia’s civic and foundation community should rally behind the Trust and contribute funds to help create this revolving loan fund.

## Germantown Town Hall 5928 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia

**Significance:** With its colonnaded rotunda and bell tower, Germantown Town Hall is a familiar landmark on this busy stretch of Germantown Avenue. For the last five years, though, the impressive building has lain empty and unused. Modeled on William Strickland’s Greek Revival Merchant’s Exchange Building in Independence National Historical Park, the Town Hall was designed by J. Sinkler and built in 1923. Inside, and currently inaccessible to the public, are several historic treasures including a clock made by Isaiah Luken in 1828 that hung in Independence Hall until 1877, World War 1 memorial tablets, and a bell by John Wilbank that was cast in the same shop as the Liberty Bell. Until 1995, the building housed branches of city departments, most recently a police station, and it remains in city ownership.

**Threat:** “This is a building looking for a use,” says Mary Dabney, director of the Germantown Historical Society. Vacant and boarded up for the past five years, the structure is increasingly deteriorating, raising the potential of damage by fire or eventual demolition through neglect. Despite efforts by the local Germantown community, the City has made no apparent effort to maintain the building. “This is a magnificent building,” says Dabney, “and it needs attention.”

**Solution:** As the owner of this important historic structure, the City should undertake a careful assessment of the condition of the building and its contents. The historic clock, bell and memorial tablets should be protected and immediate preservation actions identified to secure the exterior shell of the building and prevent further deterioration.

Long-term use of the building could be facilitated by a nominal lease to a nonprofit organization that could preserve and manage the property and undertake its restoration. One way for the City to contribute to such an effort would be to lease some space for City offices serving residents of Northwest Philadelphia. Additional support could come from office use by elected officials many of whom now rent space in other sections of Germantown. Such commitments, coupled with retail use on the ground floor and use of the main floor rotunda for community events or a visitors’ center, might produce a feasible program that could support continued operating costs. Such an approach could be facilitated by a City or foundation grant for a feasibility study for permanent use and restoration funding for the building.



Photo by Will Stacey

## Historic Farmhouse 1817 South Vogdes Street, Philadelphia



Photo by Will Stacey

**Significance:** This circa 1764 stone farmhouse in Philadelphia is a rare survivor of the days when most of what is now Philadelphia was farmland. “It provides an opportunity for us to look at what the neighborhood once was, when there were only a couple of roads through Southwest Philadelphia and all around were fields,” says Donna Henry, executive director of the Southwest Community Development Corporation. In its simple vernacular style, small size (less than 900 square feet), and walls of local stone, this farmhouse is not unlike scores that survive as well-kept residences throughout the Philadelphia suburbs. But squeezed as it is between early-20th century rowhouses in the city’s Kingsessing neighborhood, the farmhouse now appears decidedly out of time and out of place.

The farmhouse was probably built when James Coultas owned the 25 acres of farmland upon which the structure originally sat. Coultas was a prominent Philadelphian who served as High Sheriff of Philadelphia County for a time. Since his primary residence is known to have been elsewhere, it is likely that this farmhouse was used by tenant farmers. It is listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

**Threat:** Although the structure itself is in stable condition, with no visible cracks in the masonry, the fate of the building is unclear. As a result of drug use, the Philadelphia District Attorney’s office recently had the property vacated and sealed. Sealed drug houses in Southwest Philadelphia are often abandoned, and it is feared that this one will be no different. “It’s astonishing

that rowhouses were built up so close around this house,” says Henry. “Now, as a drug house, its use is urban and modern. We need to reverse that and save this house.” The current owner bought the house in 2002 and appears to have no proactive intentions.

**Solution:** The best hope for the farmhouse would be a sale to a new owner who would appreciate and invest in its historical character. Despite its location in a somewhat distressed neighborhood—rowhouses in move-in condition in the immediate area can be bought for as little as \$25,000—the property offers the benefit of being a free-standing structure with yards on all sides. The most logical use is its original one: a residence. Other possibilities include a facility for a community-based organization.

# 2003 ENDANGERED PROPERTIES

## Lynnewood Hall (P. A. B. Widener Estate)

920 Spring Avenue, Elkins Park, Montgomery County

**Significance:** Lynnewood Hall is arguably the grandest of the surviving Gilded Age estate houses in the region. Designed by Horace Trumbauer for Philadelphia industrialist P. A. B. Widener, Lynnewood Hall (1898-1901) was built to impress. Prominently sited at the center of its 34-acre property—which originally boasted formal gardens, statuary, fountains and terraces—the house is in the French Classical style, with a grand foyer, stairway, and French-styled salons, as well as a large, sky-lit wing specifically designed to display Widener's art collection.

"Lynnewood Hall was Trumbauer's crown jewel," says John Romano, who nominated the property, "at least in terms of his surviving estates. Sadly we lost Whitemarsh Hall a few decades ago. It would be a great shame to lose Lynnewood, too."

**Threat:** In recent decades, Lynnewood Hall has been home to the Faith Theological Seminary, founded by ultraconservative religious leader Carl McIntyre. As McIntyre's religious empire slowly dissolved in the 1980s and '90s, Lynnewood's garden features and some of its historic interiors—including mantles and walnut paneling—were sold off to help keep financial problems at bay. The Lynnewood Hall property was

eventually foreclosed upon by the second-mortgagee, a one-time follower of McIntyre. Now owned by the First Korean Church of New York, Lynnewood Hall is now vacant (although some security is reportedly on site). Although some mothballing efforts have been instituted, no significant stabilization or repair efforts have been evident.

**Solution:** The Gilded Age is long over, and it is hard to imagine Lynnewood Hall ever again being an estate house. But there are numerous, successful examples of other Philadelphia-region estates being adapted to institutional uses: the current campuses of Arcadia, Eastern, Rosemont, and Cabrini colleges were all once Gilded Age estates.

Under the right terms it is possible that Lynnewood's current owner and Cheltenham Township could allow transfer of the property to an institutional owner, although the township's tax base is already weakened by a disproportionate number of tax-exempted nonprofit property owners throughout the township. In order to address this issue, perhaps part of the 34-acre estate – say 10 acres – could be used for limited residential development that would increase tax revenues as well as defray the expense of acquiring, restoring, and maintaining Lynnewood.



Photo by Will Stacey

## Christ Temple Church 1617 Girard Avenue, Philadelphia



Photo by Will Stacey

**Significance:** Originally founded as the Green Hill Presbyterian Church in 1846, Christ Temple Church is one of the region's earliest examples of

Gothic Revival architecture, a style that eventually became the favorite of liturgical denominations across the country. Its architect was John Notman

who also designed the Athenaeum, Laurel Hill Cemetery, and Holy Trinity Church on Rittenhouse Square.

The brownstone church once sported a tall stone steeple (since removed) which made it one of the tallest structures in what was then known as Francisville. The wide nave and narrow side aisles of the sanctuary are defined by slim cast-iron columns supporting heavy hammer beams. Gothic tracery windows bring light spilling into the interior.

**Threat:** Christ Temple Church is typical of scores of other inner-city congregations which are aging and dwindling in size and therefore unable to maintain large and older, albeit historic, church buildings. Recognizing this demographic trend, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has named historic urban churches nationwide to its America's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places 2003 list ([www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)).

Decades of deferred maintenance and repairs have taken their toll at Christ Temple: the sanctuary

space is no longer usable, and the congregation is relegated to the rear parish hall. Years of water infiltration have resulted in accelerating masonry, wood, and plaster deterioration, and the systems need upgrading. One estimate puts repairs at more than \$1,500,000.

**Solution:** Partners for Sacred Places has identified several strategies that can benefit congregations such as Christ Temple. These include sharing the financial burden of repairs with another congregation or community group which would also share the building facilities; selling the church building to a new owner who has the wherewithal to accomplish a rehabilitation project; seeking financial help from outside individual donors, and philanthropic, governmental, or corporate sources. Outside funding support is likely to occur only if the church building is opened to community uses such as social or educational services. In the meantime, the building should be stabilized to prevent further deterioration, and the vacated spaces secured to protect the property.

## Uptown Theater 2240-2248 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia

**Significance:** In his book *Philadelphia Theaters*, Irving Glazer describes the Uptown as "the crowning achievement of architects Magaziner, Bernhard & Harris." While the exterior façade is essentially that of an ornate office building—the theater originally contained four floors of office space—embellished with East-Indian motifs, it is the interior that really impresses. Almost every surface of the interior spaces—auditorium, foyer, promenade, balcony, lounges, stage—is lavishly decorated with Art Deco ornament, grillwork, and frescos finished in showy metallic colors. Much of the original interior survives.

The Uptown began life in the late 1920s as a movie palace and live-act venue. Live stage shows continued at the Uptown for decades after Philadelphia's last vaudeville house closed. One of the first theaters nationally to use acoustical tiles in response to the advent of the "talkies," it was so admired that its design was pirated by another architect for a theater (recently restored as a

performing-arts center) in Pasadena, CA. In more recent times, the Uptown launched the careers of many rhythm 'n' blues entertainers, including Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, and the Temptations.

**Threat:** Long closed as a movie theater, the Uptown has been unused for many years and is suffering from deterioration including water infiltration through the roof (repairs estimated at \$130,000). The current owner, the Uptown Entertainment and Development Corporation (UEDC), hopes to revitalize the Uptown as a multi-purpose entertainment venue, including live performances, a recording studio, and a training center for entertainment technology, but has yet to raise sufficient funds to undertake significant repairs.

**Solution:** The nonprofit owners have conducted a feasibility study, and were recently granted \$25,000 from the City's Commerce Department to produce pre-development plans. The Uptown's



Photo: Irvin R. Glazer Collection at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia

strategic location on north Broad Street makes it "the northern anchor for the Avenue of the Arts" according to UEDC president Linda Richardson. Strategic partnerships with other community-based organizations – including nearby Temple

University – should be explored to share the use and costs of restoring the Uptown. Until viable uses are identified, the theater should be stabilized to keep moisture out and secured to protect the property.

# 2003 ENDANGERED PROPERTIES

## Church of Christ *(Patterson Memorial Presbyterian Church), 63rd and Vine Streets, Philadelphia*



Photo by Philadelphia Historical Commission

**Significance:** The Patterson Memorial Presbyterian Church, now known as the Church of Christ, was built in 1895 and designed by T.P. Chandler, one of Philadelphia's most prominent church architects. Chandler designed a number of significant religious and bank buildings in Philadelphia and founded the University of

Pennsylvania's School of Architecture. Patterson Memorial is a handsome structure in the Romanesque style with sanctuary, chapel and bell tower framing a generous front yard at the corner of 63rd and Vine Streets. The exterior of the building, the bell tower and interior of the chapel are all in their original historic condition,

although the sanctuary interior was rebuilt following a fire many years ago. The church is a distinctive landmark in the neighborhood.

**Threat:** Church of Christ is typical of many churches in the city whose congregations have declined and now have difficulty maintaining their properties. It's also an example of the development pressures faced by congregations whose churches are in locations that are attractive for commercial uses.

In 2000 the Church of Christ applied to the City's Historical Commission for a permit to demolish the church complex, based on the fact that a chapel wall that had previously collapsed appeared to be unstable and the church could not afford to repair it. The Historical Commission denied the demolition permit, in part because an inspection by Keast and Hood suggested that the damaged elements were repairable. In its presentation, the church reported that it had received an offer on the site as a vacant parcel of land that exceeded the amount it could gain by selling the church building to another congregation. If adjacent land uses are any indication, the likely new use would be a gas station or convenience store. An appeal to Common Pleas Court found in favor of the church and City was instructed to issue a demolition permit. The City has since appealed the case to the State Supreme Court.

**Solution:** Though little can be done to influence the decision of the State Supreme Court, community support might encourage the Church of Christ to consider preservation regardless of the outcome. Concern for preservation might also be combined with expressions of concern about rezoning the site for commercial use, an issue on which the District Councilman's office could be of assistance.

The larger issue represented by the Church of Christ is the need for assistance to religious congregations in maintaining their properties and in finding appropriate new users when these buildings no longer fit the needs of the current congregation. Partners for Sacred Places, a non-profit organization specializing in providing assistance to owners of historic religious properties, has recently begun a pilot program, funded by the William Penn Foundation, to train congregations to see their buildings as assets and find new funding and new partners to help preserve their sacred places as centers of community service. This effort needs to be expanded beyond West and Northwest Philadelphia, where the program is currently focused, and combined with a program for strategic capital improvement grants to religious properties serving the broad interests of their communities.

## Sleighton Farm School For Girls

*485 Valley Road, Glen Mills, Delaware County*

**Significance:** The historic campus of the former Sleighton Farm School for Girls contains 29 historic buildings, including 19th and early 20th century school buildings, an imposing chapel, cottages, a stone barn, and 19th century farm structures, as well as 350 acres of open space. Some of these historic buildings were designed by Cope and Stewardson who also designed educational buildings at Princeton, Bryn Mawr, and the University of Pennsylvania. The campus has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Sleighton School's predecessor, the House of Refuge, was founded by Quakers in 1826 to handle juvenile delinquents. By 1906 however, the Philadelphia facilities were deemed too harsh an environment and the then-rural Sleighton School campus was constructed to provide an environment "intended to emulate a large family" by providing cottage-like dormitory buildings in a rural setting where the "therapeutic power of growing things" became part of the girls' education.

The school closed in 2001 due to financial difficulties. The property is jointly owned by Sleighton, Inc., and Elwyn, Inc.

**Threat:** The property is now under agreement with a retirement developer who is apparently considering preserving some of the buildings, including the chapel, but intends to develop the remainder of the property. New residential subdivisions are rife in this once-rural area, with many houses selling for more than \$500,000. Although 136 of the 350 acres on the school property are protected by a state-held agricultural easement, the rest of the property is in danger of subdivision, with loss of historic buildings and open space. To complicate matters, the property bridges two Delaware County townships - Edgmont and Middletown - which have different planning and zoning requirements. Neither has a historic preservation ordinance.

The threat is keenly felt by neighbors of the historic institution. "You can't bring the architects back from the dead," says Elizabeth Cordoni, a founder of Friends and Neighbors of Sleighton School. "Many of the buildings are an integral part of the school's history, like a canning house where they canned all their fruits and vegetables, and a powerhouse where they generated all their electricity." Many of the neighbors, says Cordoni, are outraged not only that historic buildings are in



Photo by J. Randall Cotton

jeopardy, but also that a much needed social resource has been taken away.

**Solution:** Edgmont and Middletown townships should work cooperatively toward a joint development master plan. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has upheld 'development moratoriums' under certain conditions, and these two townships should consider one until a master plan is in

place. Limited subdivision on the property could be allowed without the loss of the historic structures or cultural landscapes. "Smart growth" strategies such as cluster development, increased density for new residential development in exchange for open-space protection, and preservation—and conservation—easement tax incentives should also be considered.

## OTHER NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Spring Lake Farm *(Montgomery Co.)*

1900 block of Sansom St. *(Philadelphia)*

Richmond Power Station *(Philadelphia)*

Philadelphia Neighborhood Porches

Smith Playground *(Philadelphia)*

Kirkbride Center *(West Philadelphia)*

Krewstown Road Bridge *(Philadelphia)*

Mount Moriah Cemetery  
*(Philadelphia/Yeadon, Delaware Co.)*

Garrett-Dunn House *(Germantown)*

Joshua Pusey House *(Delaware Co.)*

Harbison Dairy Watertower *(Philadelphia)*

Shawmont Waterworks *(Philadelphia)*

John Stafford Mansion *(Philadelphia)*

Western Union Building *(Philadelphia)*

Lee's Shoddy Mill *(Lower Merion)*

---

---

## 19TH AND SANSOM DEMOLITION APPEALED

---



Photo by John Gallery



For many years the Philadelphia Parking Authority has been proposing to build a 500-600 car parking garage with movie theaters above on a site that extends from Walnut Street (opposite Rittenhouse Square) to Sansom Street between 19th and 20th streets. The project requires the demolition of three historic properties on Sansom Street in the Rittenhouse/ Filtler Historic District. Opponents from the Rittenhouse Square area unsuccessfully contested the zoning variances needed for the project, leading the Parking Authority to submit an application for demolition to the Historical Commission in August. At its September meeting, by a 5-6 vote, the Commission rejected the Architectural Committee's recommendation to deny the demolition permit and instead voted to allow demolition to proceed while retaining only the facade of one of the three historic buildings. The Commission's decision was based on that section of the ordinance that allows buildings to be demolished when "necessary to the public interest."

The Alliance and many others testified in opposition to demolition. We and others argued that the project did not meet the standards City Council intended for demolition in the public interest and that it created a precedent for future projects. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* agreed and published an editorial questioning the Commission's decision. Only one demolition application has ever been approved under this provision, and that is for the expansion of the Convention Center. Subsequent to the Commission's approval, the Alliance and three other parties all filed appeals with the L&I Review Board and obtained a stay to prevent demolition while the appeals are being heard. A hearing is scheduled for November 10th. The results of the hearing and further updates on this matter will be posted on the Alliance's website.

---

---

## CONSERVATION DISTRICTS BILL INTRODUCED

---

When Councilman Frank DiCiccio introduced a bill in 2002 to create Residential Preservation and Revitalization Overlay Districts (R-PROD) the Alliance and the AIA Community Design Collaborative raised questions about some aspects of the proposed program. With the support of the Councilman, the Alliance and the Collaborative worked with his staff, and the staff of Councilman Kenney's office, to review the proposed bill and suggest modifications. This effort has resulted in the introduction of a new bill by Councilman

DiCiccio to create Conservation Districts, which follows very closely the recommendations made by the Alliance and the Collaborative.

As part of its work on this project, the Alliance evaluated Conservation Districts in other cities in the United States. This research, undertaken by preservation planner Lori Salganicoff, identified 14 cities that had some experience with creating and implementing conservation districts. Some cities saw these districts as alternatives to historic district

designation while others saw them as an outgrowth of planning and community development. To understand which approach would work best for Philadelphia, the Alliance conferred with the staffs of both the City Planning Commission and the Historical Commission. In addition, with the assistance of the Community Design Collaborative, we convened a meeting of 15 representatives of neighborhood organizations to give us their views on the concept.

The current bill, which will have hearings before City Council in November, focuses on the creation of design guidelines for individual neighborhoods to help maintain the existing physical character of those areas. The design guidelines would be developed with residents of the area and, once adopted by City Council, would be administered by the City Planning Commission. The full text of the bill can be found on the Alliance's website, which will also include a report on City Council's actions later this month.

---

---

## WHAT WILL YOU LEAVE THE NEXT GENERATION?

---



Picture this: a snapshot of a brick schoolhouse. An American flag waves out front. Trees dot the landscape.

But this picture is only a piece of a larger scene: A larger photograph shows children posing for their class picture...their teacher standing to the side smiling proudly. The happy, laughing children sit cross-legged and kneeling along the side of a road on a concrete sidewalk, while a seven-story parking garage towers in the background where the school used to stand. The caption under the image reads: "No one looks back fondly on the time they spent in a parking garage."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Ad Council joined forces for the first time to create a series of public service ads showing the importance of saving the places that tell the story of our lives.

These poignant, slice-of-life messages promote building a new American preservation ethic—one that cherishes and protects important places in every community. The ads end with a question to leave the audience pondering: "What will we leave the next generation to remember us by?"

The Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia has joined the efforts as a local partner in the initiative, along with two other Pennsylvania organizations: Preservation Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation.

Nearly 60 state and local organizations have signed on as local partners to assist in the promotion of the three-year public service advertising campaign. Through nationwide television, radio, and print advertisements, the National Trust encourages individuals to recognize the importance of local environments and to work to conserve and promote their unique qualities.

"We want to make preservation issues more visible to Americans," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust. "We're trying to make people aware of the historic structures in their own communities."

Don't think that historic preservation applies only to famous buildings and landmarks. Of course, we'd never think of destroying world-famous icons of history and architecture such as Mount Vernon or the Alamo. But every day, other historic places that enrich and inform our daily

lives are destroyed by demolition, neglect, and the simple wear-and-tear of weather and time. No other place is this more prominent than in our own backyards of Philadelphia.

The campaign was created pro bono by Arnold Worldwide, including television, print, and radio ads urging people to protect and save their communities' historic structures. The ads were sent to 28,000 media outlets across the country in April 2003 and were to run in advertising time and space donated by the media. By late summer, the National Trust reported that Pennsylvania led all media outlets in using the PSA ads.

Watch—and listen—for the ads on your local stations.

### Check out the ads

See the radio, television, and print ads at [www.preservationalliance.com](http://www.preservationalliance.com) in our "What's New?" section and let us know what you think.

The Alliance's participation in the National Trust campaign is made possible by a generous grant from the Masonry Preservation Group and by contributions from the Chestnut Hill Historical Society and the Lower Merion Conservancy.

---

---

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

**Officers:** Paul Steinke, Chair • John D. Milner, FAIA, Vice Chair • Lenore Millhollen, Secretary • Christophe Terlizzi, Treasurer

**Directors:** Peter Benton • Alan Buerger • Kathy Dowdell • Carl E. Dranoff • Rosemarie Fabien • Susan Glassman • Daniel Keating III • Eugene Lefevre • Betty Marmon • David Molke-Hanson • Edward A. Liva • G. Craig Schelter • William Schwartz • Christophe Terlizzi • Robert Vance • Jeremiah J. White, Jr.

### STAFF

John Andrew Gallery, Executive Director (Ext.22)

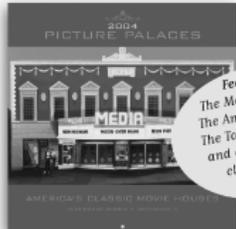
J. Randall Cotton, Associate Director (Ext.21)

Lisa D. Bendezu, Director of Membership & Special Events (Ext.19)

**PRESERVATION MATTERS** Design: Prough Creatives

LIMITED 2004 EDITION

## HISTORIC PICTURE PALACES CALENDAR



**\$15.95\***

Featuring  
The Media Theater  
The Anthony Wayne  
The Tower Theater...  
and other regional  
classic movie  
houses

GREAT FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS  
WHILE HELPING TO PRESERVE  
OUR COMMUNITIES!

\*Five dollars of each calendar purchase goes to historic theater advocacy initiatives of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia. To view all twelve calendar images in full color go to [www.theatreprints.com](http://www.theatreprints.com). Order your calendar(s) using the form below or at [www.theatreprints.com](http://www.theatreprints.com).

Sponsored by: First Keystone Bank • Comcast • Main Line Today Magazine  
WJBR 99.5 FM • Town Talk Newspapers • Artemis Productions

Yes, please send the 2004 Picture Palaces Calendar(s) to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

|   |                  |          |
|---|------------------|----------|
| Number of calendars ordered: _____              | @ \$15.95 each = | \$ _____ |
| Shipping (first class) and handling:            |                  | \$ 5.95  |
| Total (make check out to "CAC/Picture Palaces") |                  | \$ _____ |

Mail this form to: Rothacker Advertising & Design, Suite 6  
1215 W. Baltimore Pike  
Media, PA 19063 code: PAGP

## EASEMENTS

1608 Chestnut Street: The latest historic property to be protected by a preservation easement donated to the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia is 1608 Chestnut Street which was built in 1927 to the design of architectural firm William Steele and Sons (which also designed Shibe Park). This commercial property – which is part of the National Register Center City West Commercial Historic District – was originally the Jackson and Moyer men's clothing store. Unlike many of the commercial buildings now on Chestnut Street, 1608 retains all its original architectural features including impressive cast bronze and limestone ornamentation in Art Deco and Adamesque motifs. It also retains its deeply recessed entryway which maximized the number of display windows and originally drew passersby into the men's store. The preservation easement protects the historic appearance of the property in perpetuity and allows the property owner to claim a tax deduction.



Photo by J. Randall Cotton

## ARE YOU A MEMBER?

Join in the efforts to preserve the city's architectural treasures and our nation's heritage. Your participation has never been so vital. When you become a member, you show how important historic preservation is to you.

As a member, you'll receive discounted tickets to our fabulous insider tours and invitations to special events!

For a complete list of levels and benefits, visit our website at [www.preservationalliance.com](http://www.preservationalliance.com).

You can become a member instantly online! **Professional Partner level and Corporate Memberships are also available.**

History. Humanity. Community. You *can* make a difference.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Preservation Alliance actively promotes the appreciation, protection, and revitalization of the Philadelphia region's historic buildings, communities, and landscapes. Support our mission and join today!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$35                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign me up for Young Friends. At no extra cost, I would like to receive invitations to social events, tours, talks, and unique outings. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$50                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in volunteering at the Preservation Alliance.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer \$100                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like you to contact me about a contribution of assets.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$300                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> In addition to my membership, I wish to make a tax-deductible contribution at this time to the Preservation Alliance: \$ _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$500                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to receive member gifts, such as magazine subscriptions, in recognition of my contribution.                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cornerstone Society \$1,000 - \$2,500 - \$5,000 |  |

Total amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My check is enclosed (please make checks payable to **Preservation Alliance**)

Please charge my:  Visa  Master Card  American Express Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp.: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (day): \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (evening): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this application to: Preservation Alliance, 1616 Walnut Street, Suite 2110, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Memberships are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania: 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Nonprofit Organization  
 U.S. Postage PAID  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 Permit No. 987



**PRESERVATION ALLIANCE**

for greater *philadelphia*

1616 Walnut Street, Suite 2110  
 Philadelphia PA 19103

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**THANK YOU!**

THE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE EXTENDS ITS APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

**PRESERVATION MATTERS SPONSOR:**

**PSA CAMPAIGN SPONSOR:**

**MASONRY PRESERVATION GROUP, INC.**

**Cornerstone Society**

Mr. Peter Benton  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alan Buerger  
 Ms. Janet S. Klein  
 Mr. Eugene B. Lefevre  
 Mr. David Moltke-Hansen  
 Mrs. Nancy Most  
 The Shusterman Foundation  
 Mr. Paul R. Steinke  
 Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wolf  
 Mr. Jeremiah J. White Jr.

**Corporate Benefactors**

Citizens Bank  
 Reading Terminal Market

**Corporate Patron**

Dranoff Properties, Inc.  
 INTECH  
 John Milner Architects, Inc.

**Corporate Sponsor**

Keating Building Corporation

**Professional Partners**

AIA Philadelphia  
 Atkin, Olshin, Lawson-Bell  
 Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll  
 Blackney Hayes: Architects  
 Bower Lewis Thrower Architects  
 Center City District  
 Christ Church Preservation Trust  
 Citizens Bank Foundation  
 Clarion/Samuels Associates  
 Cloud Gehshan Associates  
 DOMUS  
 E. Allen Reeves, Inc.  
 Granite Penn Square  
 Gray Smith's Office  
 J.S. Cornell & Son  
 Keast & Hood Co.  
 Kise Straw & Kolodner  
 Krieger Architects  
 LZA Technology  
 MGA Partners Architects  
 Michael M. Coldren Co. Inc.

O'Donnell & Naccarato Inc.  
 Olin Partnership Ltd.  
 Parkway Corporation  
 Paul Steege & Associates Architects  
 Pennrose Properties  
 Renaissance Properties Inc.  
 Snyderville CDC  
 Susan Maxman Architects  
 Toll Brothers, Inc.  
 Ueland, Junker, McCauley,  
 Nicholson  
 Unkefer Brothers Construction  
 Urban Engineers, Inc.  
 Voith & Mactavish  
 W.S. Cumby & Son, Inc.  
 Wausau Window and Wall Systems  
 Wesley Architects  
 Wilmington Trust  
 Wolf Block Schorr and Solis-Cohen LLP  
 Wyatt Incorporated  
 Your Part-Time Controller

**INDEX**  
**WINTER 2003**  
*Preservation*  
**MATTERS**

**PHILADELPHIA REGION'S MOST ENDANGERED PROPERTIES .....1,3,4,5**

**REGIONAL INITIATIVES .....2**

- **Improved Web site**
- **Victor Building**
- **Regional Preservationist Meet**

**PRESERVATION ADVOCACY .....6**

- **19th & Sansom**
- **Conservation Districts Proposed**
- **Preservation Ad Campaigns**



In celebration of the opening the Fairmount Waterworks Interpretative Center and to draw attention to the restoration of the Engine House, the Alliance and the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust hosted a reception for members of both organizations in the Engine House in September. The 75 guests enjoyed beautiful views of the Schuylkill River and heard John Carr, Executive Director of the Trust (pictured), and Ernesta Ballard, board member responsible for fundraising, discuss the status of the Waterworks restoration project.